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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9182
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 8980
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 1903
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 8807
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 3946
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3364
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 3668
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 002529

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2015
TAGS: PGOV PTER PHUM NP
SUBJECT: UML HAS SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION IN WEST

REF: KATHMANDU 2519

Classified By: Amb. James F. Moriarty, Reason 1.4 (b/d)

Thousands Participate in Peaceful Demonstration

¶1. (C) On November 19, CPN-UML held a peaceful mass meeting to protest against the King and in favor of democracy in Butwal, Rupandehi District. Despite reported government efforts to prevent supporters from reaching Butwal, thousands attended. Estimates of the crowd vary: Birendra Chhetri, Chairman of the Rupandehi District Development Committee, told us that the turnout was about 15,000; Assistant Chief District Officer (CDO) Rudranath Basyal said about 20,000. However, Kashinath Adhikari, CPN-UML Central Committee Member put the number at approximately 70,000, and K.P. Oli, another Central Committee Member, told us that about 130,000 people took part. UML sources confirmed that the demonstration was peaceful and the government did not arrest anybody. Adhikari said that, although the government did not declare any restricted areas in Butwal, security personnel blocked the highways. Chhetri asserted that there was no blockade along the highways, but security personnel were deployed in various areas to conduct security checks. Basyal also stressed that there was no blockade as alleged by the UML, and questioned how UML supporters could have come in the numbers claimed if the government had blocked the roads.

¶2. (U) CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal told those gathered that the seven-party alliance and the Maoists had "come up with constituent assembly as a common ground of agreement." He asserted that the Maoists had "even agreed to lay down arms under the supervision of the United Nations." According to the press, the UML will continue its program of zonal meetings: in Pokhara November 25, Janakpur on November 27, Kathmandu on December 2, Biratnagar on December 17, and Birgunj on January 6.

Comment

¶3. (C) MK Nepal is working to convince his party members that the Maoists have made enough concessions to form the basis of an agreement with the insurgents to go against the King. However, many party members are worried about the Maoists' own silence to date regarding any commitment to renounce violence and their continued use of threats and violence, including against UML cadre attempting to return to

the villages.
MORIARTY